

IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

P E T I T I O N

OF THE

R O M A N C A T H O L I C S

OF

I R E L A N D.

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT

IN FEBRUARY 1792.

WITH

A P R E F A C E.

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D U B L I N:

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M.DCC.XCII.

NOTATION

THE

MASSACHUSETTS

OF

GENERAL

AND TO THE

LEGISLATIVE

COMMISSION

AND

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LANDS

AND

# P R E F A C E.

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THE following is the Petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, which Mr. O'Hara attempted to present to the House of Commons on Wednesday the first of February. As another Petition has since been substituted in its Place, some Gentlemen have thought proper to assert, that the former Petition was seditious: And that it was withdrawn, because, (according to their Supposition) the sedate and dignified Decorum, the sober and well-tempered legislative Gravity of an *Irish Senate* has awed these rude and sturdy Petitioners into a Style of Expression more becoming the Majesty of that august and truly venerable Assembly. Such is the Judgment of these sound and impartial Critics, concerning a House of Commons which they *have*, and a Petition which they have *not* seen. As the best Refutation of the Calumny, the Petition is now submitted to the Public.

AMIDST the Variety of Moral Productions generated in the rank Fecundity of a great Metropolis, there is to be found in this City (as I am credibly informed) one of a very singular Description.—A Set of Persons who, in the common Affairs of Life, talk and act like rational Creatures; and who (though they were never before known very particularly to labour under the Influence of polemic Dogma or political Principle;) have of late been agitated with all the Symptoms of the most violent religious Zeal and the wildest political Fanaticism. They are perpetually haunted with a Chimera of the Brain, which they pursue without ceasing, and which (in a Form of Speech wholly destitute of Meaning and unknown to the Laws) they denominate THE PROTESTANT ASCENDENCY.—I shall not be at all surprised if, among the Sectators of this *new political Superstition*, some are found who will think the Petition now submitted to the Public *seditious*, perhaps *treasonable*. Such is the Association of our Ideas that when one is radically depraved, the whole Mind is subverted. Those who are so far subject to the Impressions of a fervid Imagination, as to fancy they see the *Destruction* of the British Constitution in the *Communion of its Franchises*—those who, in a Pursuit of the ancient Rights and Liberties derived from the *earliest Times*, and founded in the Institutions of our *feudal Ancestors*, can discover the *levelling Principle* and the *modern Tenets* of natural Right, may, by a Continuation of the Illusion, see

many Things in this Petition greatly to disturb their minds. The impressive Sense of conscious injured Worth, will sound in *their* Ears like Contumacy and Defiance.—In the Refutation of unjust Calumnies—they will discover a *Libel*: In the Assertion of outraged Loyalty, they will find—the *Language of Sedition*: A manly Confidence in the *Justice* of Parliament, they will term an Invasion of Privilege; and a Restriction of Legislative Omnipotence; *The Lamentations* of unmerited Proscription, the fair Exposition of public Grievances and the Cries of an oppressed People, they will distort into *Intimidation and Menace*: And, perhaps in some stronger Paroxysm, pronounce it a *treasonable Manifesto*. All this Confusion of Ideas and Inversion of Terms proceeds from an Error in the Judgment, and cannot be imputed as Guilt to any Man. Charity requires that it should be attributed solely to the rising Fumes of PROTESTANT ASCENDENCY. We all know and pity the Effect produced in the Mind by the Dominion of some one predominant Idea. *Veniam petimus damusque vicissim*. Other men, when they think on the *Emancipation of the Roman Catholics*, may also be inclined to see Things under Appearances perhaps foreign to their true Nature. In the palid Fears of State—they may see the bold Pretexts and brazen Front of shameless Tyranny: In a pious Solicitude for the Welfare of the Church—they may see the low Workings of an ignorant and bigotted Rancour: they may discover the Spirit of civil and religious Persecution—in a *Panegyric on the glorious Revolution*: and in that generous Zeal for the *Protestant Ascendancy* which warms so many Breasts—they may behold the churlish, insatiable, degenerate Cravings of Proscription and Monopoly. Is this too strong? Are these Objects magnified and distorted by an Error of intellectual Vision? Be it so. Let those who would take the Mote out of their Neighbour's Eye, remove the Beam from their own.

If on the Perusal of the ensuing Petition, any Body should think the Style of it unusual and unparliamentary—let him recollect that the Circumstances of the Case are unusual also. It is not the Occurrence of every Day. Three-fourths of a Kingdom petition the Legislature of that Kingdom for the partial Reversal of a *parliamentary Attainder*—by which (in Addition to an Infinitude of other penal Inflictions) they have stood disfranchised for more than Half a Century—without a Crime! Men in such a Situation *ought* to feel deeply and strongly. There is a Sort of Dignity in unmerited Degradation, and the Language of those who aspire to the British Constitution ought not to be base and servile. In composing  
this

this Petition the Writer endeavoured to express the genuine Sentiments of a *loyal* People—by an unnatural Inversion of moral Order subjected to the Penalties of *Disaffection*.—And he succeeded.

THE Necessity of adverting to the peculiar Character, and even to the accidental Temper, of those whom you address is among the first Principles of Composition.—And some Readers may object that this Petition was framed upon the Ideas of a Stranger to this Country, and therefore unacquainted with the *peculiar Genius* of an Irish Parliament. This Point we leave to the Decision of an impartial Public. It must be confessed (whether it makes for or against the Writer) that in drawing the Petition, the Idea evidently conceived and carefully preserved in his Mind was that of an Application from Irish Subjects to an Irish Parliament, not—an Address from Slaves to Tyrants—An Application to Minds open to Conviction, destitute of Biggotry, sensible to human Miseries, patient to hear Wrongs and ready to redress them—Such as Parliament is in Contemplation of Law—devoid of Passion, superior to Interest, and endued with that beneficent and parental Wisdom which more than the Nomination of the Crown, or the Delegation of the People, constitutes the Essence of legislative Power. Such was the Idea on which the original Petition was framed. And surely it was impossible that *so great a Portion of the People*—glowing with Loyalty to their Sovereign, warmed with a patriotic Affection to their Fellow-subjects, and penetrated with the Sense of undeserved Affliction, should appear in the Face of such an Assembly as the House of Commons is or *ought to be*, with a Sincerity too frank and undisguised; with too firm a Profession of their Principles, with too strong or too feeling an Exposition of their Grievs.

HUMAN Councils are governed by Events. The Session having commenced with somewhat of a clouded Horizon, the Roman Catholics thought it more adviseable to contract their Petition and to run their Parliamentary Course, as it were, close reefed, exposing the least possible Canvass to the Fury of the Storm. Another principle presented itself. To oppose every Resource of guarded and cautious Expression, against the rude Assaults of a cavelling and capitious Hostility.—By the lenient Application of a profound and prostrate Obsequiousness, to sooth the ulcerated and sore Irritability of enraged and fettering Prejudices. It was hoped that there might exist in the Scale of human Prudence, a Degree of Circumspection, a Point of over-strained Humility, which, if it could

not

not obtain the Object of the Petition, might possibly secure it from Insult. Whether the Principle was right or wrong, the Experiment has failed. The House of Commons of Ireland has rejected humble Prayer, and spurned modest Merit. But whether the Effect of that Petition (though it sat so ill and so short a Time upon the Stomach of Parliament) be entirely lost—whether the Discussion it produced has injured or served the Cause of the Roman Catholics, is another Question. There may be those who think that the Character, the Integrity and the Ability of the Men who in the Cause of the Roman Catholics contended for the Liberties of their Country—in the Estimation of Ireland, in the Estimation of England, in the Estimation of Europe—more than compensates for the Paucity of their Numbers. I sincerely congratulate the Roman Catholics of Ireland on the Sum of that Day's Events. After the Buffets of so many penal Statutes, a Parliamentary Indignity, more or less, is no great Matter. The Roman Catholics are three Millions of Men. It is not much *among* them all. What though their Petition which had been regularly brought up—on a Question put—and lain two whole Days on the Table of the House, was dragged from its peaceful Abode, and by a Figure peculiar to the Irish Nation (after having been *received*) was *rejected* in the Face of Day: What though the Names of the first Merchants and most respectable Citizens of this Kingdom annexed to a Petition on Behalf of three Millions of the People, were read aloud, amidst Scoffs and Sneers, and Peals of Ideot Laughter: What though no Inquiry was instituted—no Day *to take into Consideration*—no *formal Motion* made (after due Solemnity of Debate) to die of *the previous Question*, or by *the Order of the Day* to be swept into eternal Oblivion: Yet the Foundation of Roman Catholic Emancipation is laid—is laid in Parliament. Reason has made its Lodgment: It will prevail. The Minds of Men will open; their Hearts will relent: They will see that Justice is Wisdom, and Union Strength: That to communicate is not to lose: That universal Liberty is public Prosperity, and public Prosperity private Emolument. In spite of Force, in spite of Interest, in spite of Monopoly, in spite of Biggotry, in spite of Ignorance, in spite of all the Resistance made or to be made by civil Hatred, shrouded in the less opprobrious Name of Prejudice—Allegiance will carry Protection, and Loyalty Freedom, until the Privileges of the British Constitution shall be co-extensive with the British Empire. He who has atchieved the Emancipation of Irish Legislature, has also put his hand to Roman Catholic Emancipation. The same

same prospective Wisdom which, in the Advantages, foresaw the Possibility of a great and happy Revolution—The same Magnanimity to brave the Shock of clamorous, idle Prejudice—The same transcendent and victorious Eloquence is again exerted, and will be exerted with the same Success. He laid the first Stone of *general Liberty*. He raised the Superstructure. To distribute *internal Freedom* to the *whole* People through all its Descriptions, will be the Completion of his Work. I saw myself, with pleasing Wonder—I saw what Eloquence, aided by the Authority of long-tried Worth, could do in the Cause of *real Liberty*. The angry Foam subsided. Pride, Disdain, Hardness of Heart, and the Spirit of Dominion stood silent, abashed, discountenanced, and ashamed. They acknowledged the Presence of something superior and commanding—

- “ Ac veluti magno in populo cum sæpe coorta est  
 “ Seditio sævitque animis *ignobile* Vulgus,  
 “ Jamque faces & faxa volant ; furor arma ministrat ;  
 “ Tum, pietate gravem ac *meritis* si forte virum quem  
 “ Conspectere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant :  
 “ Ille regit dictis animos & pectora mulcet.”

PROCEED, illustrious Senator ! perpetual Champion of Irish Freedom. Be the Deliverer of your Country a second Time, and upon a second Principle. Fulfil all your Destiny. The Cause is worthy of the Man. It is the Cause of true Liberty, it is the Cause of true Charity. It shall be yours to cheer the sinking Heart, and raise the drooping Head ; to convey the genial Warmth of the British constitution into the Abodes of Oppression, Misery and Want, and by infusing that Principle of Life through the whole Mass of Society, to fortify the Stamina, of Public Strength and of National Glory.

To return for a Moment to the Subject of a Petition which fell so pitiously at the threshold of political Existence. What would have been its Fate if it had come forward *in Time*, it is impossible now to determine. A single Circumstance varied frequently produces an Alteration in the whole Train of Events. The original Intention was, that the Petition should have been presented the *first* Day of the Session. At that Time nothing had yet appeared of that strong Expression of Opinion, which those who delight in figurative Modes of Speech, would call the *Sense of the House*. The happy Arts by which the Minds of Men have been filled with Alarm and Confusion had not been extended beyond the constituent Part of a Protestant Commons. No Advantage had been gained against the Roman Catholics in any other Place. No Man had yet made  
 a forced

a forced March—to pre-occupy the Ground—to seize upon the Measure—in order, as it were, on the Post and Citadel of Relief to open a Battery upon the Roman Catholics.—In appearance to slobber them over with the gross and filthy Slaver of a canting simulated Affection, but in reality to corrode their Fame with the Venom of slanderous Aspersions.—To play fast and loose with Names and Things.—To trick out a vain and spurious Image of departed Aristocracy; to call it the *real Catholics*; and (with a strange Mixture of Absurdity and Impudence) to refuse *their Name* to the People *themselves*.—To damn the deluded few with fraudulent Praise.—To brand the guiltless many with false Imputation.—To hold out to the Protestant Mind delusive Securities, to infuse real Fears.—In one Hand to carry Liberality, Toleration, Grace and Favour; and with the other, to scatter Division, Distraction, Suspicion and Discontent. Such is the Epitome of the Game which has been played against the Catholics. It was a Thing to be desired, that if possible they should have anticipated by the Promptitude of their Movements, this complicated Involution of hostile Manœuvre. That not being the Case the Enemies of the Catholics (and therefore the Enemies of their Country) have gained a momentary Advantage—but one which may end in their Shame and Confusion. To develop this whole Mystery of criminal Folly, unravel the perplexed Labyrinth of Passion, Absurdity and Fraud, through which it has been thought expedient to *wind* the Question of the Roman Catholics—will be the Task of a leisure Hour. Many are the Paths that lead to Death. And many are the Ways by which a Kingdom may be brought to the Ground. Amongst these not the least effectual—is—in a great national Crisis—the substitution of a low Craft, the little Tricks of State, the miserable Equivocation of double Politics, in the Room of true Policy; that is to say, the generous manly Decisions of Honour, Truth and Justice. What must that judgment be, what must be that Taste which could prefer the former! When this Petition was written, the Option had not yet been made. The whole State of Things was different. The Animosities of Men, not yet kindled into a Flame, still lurked in the obscurer Avenues of Opinion, in the Flues and Funnels of the State. The burning Rage of THE PROTESTANT ASCENDENCY had not yet broke through all Restraint; and domineering in the Porticoes of Legislation itself, laid in Ashes those fair Columns whose just and equal Proportions are the true Peristyle of the Commonwealth.—The Principles of public Prudence, and political Morality.

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# P E T I T I O N

OF THE

*Roman Catholics of Ireland, &c.*

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SHEWETH,

WE your Petitioners, being appointed by sundry of his Majesty's Subjects professing the Roman Catholic Religion, to be Agents for conducting Applications to the Legislature for their Relief, in our own and their Names, beg Leave to approach this High Court of Parliament with an unfeigned Respect for its Wisdom and Authority; and at the same Time, with a deep and heartfelt Sensation of our singular and deplorable Situation. And first of all we implore (and for this we throw ourselves on the Indulgence of Parliament) that no irregularity or defect in Form or Language, should obstruct the Success of these our most ardent Supplications. The Circumstances in which we stand deserve Consideration. For near a Hundred Years, We and our Fathers, and our Grand-fathers, had groaned under a Code of Laws, (in some Parts already purged from the Statutes) the like of which, no Age, no Nation, no Climate ever saw. Yet, sore as it were from the Scourge of active Persecution, scarce yet confirmed in our Minds, and but lately secure in our Persons and in our Houses, from the daily Alarms of Search-warrants and Informers, we come before Parliament for the first Time; and we come to ask an Alleviation of Burdens, under which we can only find Consolation in the melancholy Comparison of former Times. In this State of recent Apprehension and troubled anxious Hope, with Minds unadapted to the precise Observances of Decorum, we rest upon the simple Merits of our Case. It is a Part of our Calamities, that we do not know how to tell them with Propriety; and if our Complaints should deviate into Remonstrance, and we should seem to upbraid, when we mean to supplicate, we trust a due Allowance will

will be made for Expressions extorted by our Anguish, or proceeding from an inevitable Ignorance of Form. Excluded from the Constitution in all its Parts, and in many respects Aliens to the Law, how should we have learned the Forms of Parliament ?

THE Hardships we suffer proceed from the Law. It is therefore only to the Fountain of the Law that we can look for Relief. You are the great Council of our Sovereign Lord the King ; but you are also Subjects like ourselves. The Ear of Majesty, by the Law of the Land, and by the Benignity of that Sovereign, whom it is your Glory to imitate, is ever open to the Petitions of his People. As far as we are able to discern the great Outlines of a Constitution, which we know only in Speculation, we conceive that it is the Boast of the Constitution of these Kingdoms, to have associated a Portion of the People into the Sovereign Power ; in order that, not dazzled by the Awe of Supreme Majesty, the Subject may find a happy mediatorial Institution, an Asylum wherein to deposite the Burden of his Grievs, to expose the Nakedness of his Oppressions, and indulge Complaint even to Exaggeration. There were, indeed, those who would have made us believe, that Parliament was only to be approached with circumspect and timid Steps ; at most, in general Terms ; and that wrapped in proud inexorable State, you would consider a Specification of the Wants of the People, as an Insult and a Reason for not supplying them. But we knew it could not be. We knew that no Senate, no King, no Tyrant had ever professed to turn his Ear from detailed Supplication. The Majesty of God himself is willing to receive, and demands the Incense of particular Prayer. And shall we, who speak from Man to Man, from Subject to Subject, not dare to specify the Measure and Extent of our crying Necessities. Despising that base and hypocritical Affectation, we are sure it is far more congenial to the Nature and to the Temper of Parliament, with a firm and generous Confidence to say, as we say—here is the Evil—there is the Remedy : To you we look for Relief.

BEHOLD us then before you, three Millions of the People of Ireland, Subjects of the same King, Inhabitants of the same Land, bound together by the same social Contract, contributing to the same Revenues, defended by the same Armies, declared by the authentic Words of an Act of Parliament, to be good and loyal Subjects to his Majesty, his Crown and Government ; and yet doomed to one general unqualified Incapacity ; a universal Exclusion, a universal civil Proscription.

We

We are excluded from the State, we are excluded from the Revenues. We are excluded from every Distinction, every Privilege, every Office, every Emolument, every Civil Trust, every Corporate Right. We are excluded from the Navy, from the Army, from the Magistrature, from the Professions. We are excluded from the Palladium of Life, Liberty, and Property, the Juries and Inquests of our Country.—From what are we not excluded? We are excluded from the Constitution. We stand a strange Anomaly in the Law; not acknowledged, not disavowed; not Slaves, not Freemen; An Exception to the Principles of Jurisprudence; A Prodigy in the System of Civil Institution. We incur no small Part of the Penalties of a general Outlawry, and a general Excommunication. Disability meets us at every Hour, and in every Walk of Life. It cramps our Industry, it shackles our Property, it depresses our Genius, it debilitates our Minds.—Why are we disfranchised, and why are we degraded? Or rather, why do these Evils afflict our Country, of which we are no inconsiderable Part?

WE most humbly and earnestly supplicate and implore Parliament, to call this Law of universal Exclusion to a severe Account, and now at last, to demand of it, upon what Principle it stands, of Equity, of Morality, of Justice, or of Policy. And, while we request this Scrutiny into the Law, we demand also the severest Scrutiny into our Principles, our Actions, our Words, and our Thoughts. Wherein have we failed as loyal and affectionate Subjects to the best of Sovereigns, or as sober, peaceable, and useful Members of Society. Where is that People who can offer the Testimony of a Hundred Years patient Submission to a Code of Laws, of which no Man living is now an Advocate—without Sedition, without Murmur, without Complaint. Our Loyalty has undergone a Century of severe Persecution, for the Sake of our Religion, and we have come out of the Ordeal, with our Religion, and with our Loyalty.

WHY then are we still left under the Ban of our Country? We differ, it is true, from the National Church in some Points of doctrinal Faith. Whether it is our Blessing or our Misfortune, He only knows to whom all Things are known. For this our Religion we offer no Apology. After Ages of learned and critical Discussion, we cannot expect to throw farther Light upon it. We have only to say, that it is founded on Revelation as well as the Religion established by Law. Both you and we are regenerated in the same Baptism, and profess our Belief in the same Christ; you according to the Church  
of

of England, we according to the Church of Rome. We do not exercise an abject or obscure Superstition. If we err, our Errors have been, and still are, sanctioned by the Example of many flourishing, learned, and civilized Nations. We do not enter, we disdain to enter into the Cavils of antiquated Sophistry, and to Insult the Understanding of Parliament, by supposing it necessary to prove that a Religion is not incompatible with civil Government, which has subsisted for so many Hundred Years under every possible Form of Government, in some tolerated, in some established, even to this Day.

WITH REGARD to our civil Principles, we are unalterably, deeply, and zealously attached to his Majesty's Person and Government. Good and loyal Subjects we are, and we are declared by Law to be. With REGARD to the Constitution of the State, we are as much attached to it as it is possible for Men to be attached to a Constitution by which they are not avowed. With REGARD to the Constitution of the Church, we are, indeed, inviolably attached to our own: First, because we believe it to be true; and next, because beyond Belief, we know that its Principles are calculated to make us, and have made us good Men and good Citizens. But as we find it answers to us individually all the useful Ends of Religion, we solemnly and conscientiously declare, that we are satisfied with the present Condition of our ecclesiastical Policy. With Satisfaction, we acquiesce in the Establishment of the National Church; we neither repine at its Possessions, nor envy its Dignities; we are ready upon this Point, to give every Assurance that is binding upon Man.

WITH REGARD to every other Subject, and to every other Calumny, we have no Disavowals, we have no Declarations to make: Conscious of the Innocence of our Lives, and the Purity of our Intentions, we are justified in asking what Reason of State exists, and we deny that any does exist, for leaving us still in the Bondage of the Law, and under the protracted Restriction of Penal Statutes. Penalties suppose, if not Crimes, at least a Cause of reasonable Suspicion. Criminal Imputations like those, (for to be adequate to the Effect, they must be great indeed) are to a generous Mind, more grievous than the Penalties themselves. They incontrovertibly imply, that we are considered by the Legislature as standing in a doubtful Light of Fidelity or Loyalty to the King, or to the Constitution of our Country, and perhaps to both. While on these unjust Suppositions we are deprived of the common Rights and Privileges of British and of Irish Subjects, it is impossible for us to say, we are happy. It is impossible for us to say we are  
contented

contented while we endure a relentless civil Proscription for which no Cause is alledged, and for which no Reason can be assigned.

BECAUSE we now come, with a clear, open, and manly Voice, to insist upon the Grievances under which we still Labour, it is not to be inferred, that we have forgot the benignant Justice of Parliament which has relieved us from the more oppressive, but not the most extensive Part of the Penal System. In those Days of Affliction, when we lay prostrate under the Iron Rod, and as it were, intranced in a Gulph of Persecution, it was necessary for Parliament to go the whole Way, and to stretch out a saving Hand to relieve us. We had not the Courage to look up with Hope, to know our Condition, or even to conceive a Remedy. It is because the former Relaxations were not thrown away upon us; it is because we begin to feel the Influence of somewhat more equal Laws, and to revive from our former inanition, that we now presume to stand erect before you: Conceiving that Parliament has a Right to expect, as a Test of our Gratitude, that we should no longer lie a dead Weight upon our Country, but come forward in our Turn to assist with our Voice, our Exertions, and our Councils, in a Work, to which the Wisdom and Power of Parliament is incompetent without our co-operation—the Application of a Policy, wholly new, to the pressing Wants, and to the intimate Necessities of a People long forgotten, out of the Sight and out of the Knowledge of a superintending Legislature.—Accordingly we are come, and we claim no small Merit that we have found our Way to the Door of Parliament. It has not been made easy for us.—Every Art and Industry has been exerted to obstruct us: Attempts have been made to divide us into Factions, and to throw us into Confusion. We have stood firm and united. We have received Hints and Cautions; obscure Intimations and public Warnings to guard our Supplications against Intimidation. We have resisted that Species of disguised and artful Threat. We have been traduced, calumniated, and libelled. We have witnessed sinister Endeavours again to blow the Flame of religious Animosity, and awake the slumbering Spirit of popular Terrors and popular Fury.—But we have remained unmoved. We are, indeed, accustomed to this tumid Agitation and Ferment in the Public Mind. In former Times it was the constant Precursor of more intense Persecution, but it has also attended every later and happier Return of Legislative Mercy. But whether it betokens us evil or good, to Parliament we come,

come, to seek, at that Shrine, a Safeguard from impending Danger, or a Communication of new Benefits.

WHAT then do we ask of Parliament ? To be thoroughly united and made one with the rest of our Fellow Subjects ? That alas ! would be our first, our dearest Wish. But if that is denied us, if Sacrifices are to be made, if by an Example of rare Moderation, we do not aspire to the Condition of a fair Equality, we are not at a loss to find in the Range of Social Benefits (which is nearly that of our present Exclusions) an Object which is, and ought to be the Scope and resting Place of our Wishes and our Hopes. That which if we do not ask, we are not worthy to obtain. We knock that it may be opened unto us. We have learned by Tradition from our Ancestors, we have heard by Fame in Foreign Lands, where we have been driven to seek Education in Youth, and Bread in Manhood: and by the Contemplation of our own minds, we are filled with a deep and unalterable Opinion that the Irish, formed upon the Model of the British Constitution, is a Blessing of inestimable value: That it contributes, and is even essentially necessary for national and individual Happiness. Of this Constitution, we feel ourselves worthy; and though not practically, we know the Benefits of its Franchises. Nor can we without a criminal Diffimulation conceal from Parliament the painful Inquietude which is felt by our whole Persuasion, and the Dangers to which we do not cease to be exposed, by this our total and unmerited Exclusion from the common Rights, Privileges, and Franchises conceded by our Kings for the Protection of the Subject. This Exclusion is indeed the Root of every Evil. It is that which makes Property insecure, and Industry precarious. It pollutes the Stream of Justice. It is the Cause of daily Humiliation. It is the insurmountable Barrier, the impassible Line of Separation which divides the Nation, and which keeping Animosity alive prevents the entire and cordial Intermixture of the People. And therefore inevitably it is, that some Share, some Portion, some Participation in the Liberties and Franchises of our Country, becomes the primary and essential Object of our ardent and common Solicitation. It is a Blessing for which there is no Price, and can be no Compensation. With it, every Evil is tolerable; without it, no Advantage is desirable. In this, as in all Things, we submit ourselves to the paramount Authority of Parliament; and we shall acquiesce in what is given, as we do in what is taken away. But this is the Boon we ask. We hunger, and we thirst for the Constitution of our Country. If it shall be deemed otherwise, and shall be determined that we are qualified per-  
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haps for the base and lucrative Tenures of professional Occupation, but unworthy to perform the free and noble Services of the Constitution, we submit, indeed, but we solemnly protest against that distinction for ourselves and for our Children. It is no act of ours. Whatever judgment may await our merits or our failings, we cannot conclude ourselves, by recognizing, for a consideration, the principle of servility and perpetual degradation.

THESE are the Sentiments which we feel to the Bottom of our Hearts, and we disclose them to the free Parliament of a Monarch whose Glory it is to reign over a free People.—To you we commit our Supplications and our Cause. We have, indeed, little to apprehend in this benigner Age, from the malignant Aspersions of former Times, and not more from the obsolete Calumnies of controversial Strife; although we see them endeavouring again to collect the Remnant of their exhausted Venom, before they die for ever, in a last and feeble Effort to traduce our Religion and our Principles. But, as Oppression is ever fertile in Pretexts, we find our Objections started against us more dangerous because they are new, or new at least in the Novelty of a shameless Avowal. They are principally three.—First, It is contended that we are a People originally and fundamentally different from yourselves, and that our Interests are for ever irreconcilable, because some hundred Years ago our Ancestors were conquered by your's. We deny the Conclusion; we deny the Fact. It is False. In addressing ourselves to you we speak to the Children of our Ancestors, as we also are the Children of your Forefathers; Nature has triumphed over Law; we are intermixed in Blood; we are blended in Connexion; we are one Race; we all are Irishmen; Subjects of the Imperial Crown of Ireland. The Honour of Parliament is concerned, to repress the Audacity of those who tell us that you are a foreign Colony; and consequently ought to govern according to the Principles of Invaders, and the policy of recent Usurpation. At least we confide that you will not suffer the Walls of Parliament to be contaminated with that Libel upon the Government of Ireland. The Shaft which was aimed at us, has struck yourselves; A memorable, but at the same Time we trust, a most auspicious Example, to teach both you and us, and our common Posterity, that our Interests are one; and that whatever affects the well-being and honour of the Roman Catholics, is also injurious to the Protestant Interest. Of the same Complexion and Tendency are the two Objections, one that our Advancement in Property and Privilege, would lead to a Repeal of the

Act of Settlement; the other, that, our Participation in the Liberties and Franchises of our Country would endanger the Existence of the Constitution into which we are admitted.

A Resumption of the Lands forfeited, by our and your Ancestors, (for they are the same) after the Lapse of so many Years, (near three Returns of the longest Period of legal Limitation) after the Dispersion and Extinction of so many Families; after so many Transitions and Divisions, Repartitions and re-consolidations of Property; so many Sales, Judgments, Mortgages and Settlements; and after all various Proceſs of voluntary and legal Operation to conceive the Revival of Titles dormant for One Hundred and Fifty Years, is an Idea so perfectly chimerical so contrary to the Experience of all Ages, and all Countries, so repugnant to the Principles of Jurisprudence, and so utterly impossible in Point of Fact; that the Roman Catholics of Ireland, once for all make it their earnest Request to have that Question thoroughly investigated, in the assured Hope, that so idle, vain and absurd an Object of public Apprehension, being exposed and laid open to the Eye of Reason, may sleep in Oblivion for ever.

As to the other Subject of Apprehension we have but one Answer to make. We desire to partake in the Constitution, and therefore we do not desire to destroy it. Parliament is now in Possession of our Case; our Grievances; our Sorrows; our Obſtuctions; our Solicitudes; our Hopes. We have told you the Desire of our Hearts. We do not ask to be relieved from this or that Incapacity; Not the Abolition of this or that odious Distinction; not even perhaps to be in the fulness of Time, and in the Accomplishment of the great comprehensive Scheme of Legislation, finally incorporated with you in the Enjoyment of the same Constitution. Even beyond that Mark, we have an ultimate and if possible an Object of more interior desire. We look for an Union of Affections; A gradual, and therefore a total Obliteration of all the Animosities; (on our part they are long extinct) and all the Prejudices which have kept us disjointed. We come to you a great Accession to the Protestant Interest, with Hearts and Minds suitable to such an End. We do not come as jealous and suspicious Rivals, to gavel the Constitution, but with fraternal Minds to participate in the great incorporeal Inheritance of Freedom, to be held according to the Laws and Customs of the Realm, and by our immediate Fealty and Allegiance to the King. And so may you receive us.

And we shall ever pray.